

## CONSIDERATIONS FOR FUTURE ACTION

Water resources are critical to the health of the communities and the environment along each side of the border within the Rio Grande--Rio Conchos to above Amistad Reservoir subarea. The availability and development of limited water supplies, the use of the water, and the resultant environmental consequences of water development and use have largely defined the historical and cultural context of the region. The Rio Grande in this subarea has been not so much an international boundary as a defining element of a unique regional culture of border peoples. The management of this important resource, as well as the equitable resolution of present and future conflicts, is of concern to all DOI bureaus operating within this and adjacent subareas. Therefore, the continued cooperation among the DOI bureaus is necessary to understand and appropriately interact with the Government of Mexico as well as other Federal, State, and local entities and citizens groups, in order to address the many complex issues relating to shared-water resources.

Suggested actions from the DOI perspective include:

- Ensuring that sufficient current water-quantity, water-quality, and aquatic-biological data are readily available (including Internet availability) to assess water-resources status and trends;
- Facilitating increased cooperation and collaboration between the Government of Mexico; the States of Chihuahua, Coahuila, and Texas; and the DOI bureaus in addressing transboundary water issues affecting lands managed by the DOI;
- Recognizing the ecological, cultural, financial, and scenic values of aquatic, riparian, and recreation resources and managing Federal land in a manner that will assure biological integrity, provide recreational opportunity, and support habitat for aquatic and other wildlife communities;
- Developing an improved understanding of existing water uses and the effects of those uses on threatened and endangered species, riparian habitat and other water-dependent resources, and recreational opportunities;
- Managing DOI lands in a manner that minimizes adverse effects on water and water-dependent resources through implementation of water conservation, sustainable development, and public education; and
- Promoting public awareness of the importance of water and water-dependent resources.

The continued importance of border resource issues to the DOI is evidenced by its recent participation in the development of the Border XXI Program, a conceptual plan for binational cooperation in the transboundary region (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 1996).

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